

## Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 SY-04 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /065 W

----- 078089

R 011600Z NOV 74

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1832

INFO AMCONSUL CURACAO

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PARAMARIBO 522

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, NS

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT BUILDING BURNS DOWN IN SUSPICIOUS  
CIRCUMSTANCES

1. MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRAFFIC HEADQUARTERS, CONSISTING OF COMPLEX OF WOODEN BUILDINGS NEAR CENTER OF PARAMARIBO, BURNED TO GROUND OCTOBER 31 IN SPECTACULAR BLAZE WATCHED BY HUNDREDS OF ON-LOOKERS. AT ALMOST SAME TIME, FIRE WAS DISCOVERED IN NEARBY FINANCE MINISTRY BUILDING BUT IN THIS CASE WAS BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL WITHOUT SERIOUS DAMAGE BEING DONE. LUCKILY, NO ONE WAS KILLED OR SERIOUSLY INJURED IN BLAZES. COINCIDENCE OF FIRES AT TIME OF DAY WHEN FEW PEOPLE COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE IN THE BUILDINGS HAS AROUSED SUSPICION OF ARSON AND SET OFF WAVE OF SPECULATION ABOUT THE SUPPOSED PERPETRATORS.

2. GOS ACTED SWIFTLY TO PUT DAMPER ON POPULAR EMOTION OUT OF CONCERN THAT THE FIRES COULD EXACERBATE POLITICAL AND COMMUNAL TENSIONS. SOME, ESPECIALLY CREOLES, HAVE WONDERED IF BLAZES WERE WORK OF OPPOSITION, HINDUSTANI-DOMINATED VHP. SPEAKING TO TELEVISION AUDIENCE AFTER CALLING SPECIAL CABINET MEETING ON EVENING OF BLAZES, ACTING MINPRES, OLTON VON GENDEREN (FILLING IN FOR MINPRES ARRON WHO IS AWAY IN CARACAS) ASKED

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FOR CALM AND RESERVATION OF JUDGEMENT, AND PROMISED A THOROUGH-GOING INVESTIGATION. HE DESCRIBED DESTRUCTION OF MINISTRY

BUILDINGS AND RECORDS AS "DISASTER" FOR NATION, BUT MAINTAINED  
THAT IT WOULD NOT UPSET GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

3. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE MATTER WELL IN HAND  
AS POST-MORTEM AND INVESTIGATION GET UNDERWAY. REVIEW OF  
GOVERNMENT SAFETY AND SECURITY PRECAUTIONS PROBABLY WAS OVER-  
DUE, ANYWAY, IN THIS CITY OF WOODEN PUBLIC BUILDINGS. BURNING  
OF THE INCOME TAX OFFICE (ALSO HOUSED IN WOODEN BUILDING)  
DURING PERIOD OF SOCIAL UNREST LAST YEAR, AN EVENT WHICH HAS  
NEVER BEEN OFFICIALLY EXPLAINED, SHOWS THAT GOVERNMENT IS  
PECULIARLY VULNERABLE TO DISASTROUS FIRES, BOTH ACCIDENTAL  
AND MAN-MADE.  
FLANEGIN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FIRES, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, BUILDINGS, ARSON, INVESTIGATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 NOV 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** smithrj  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Film Number:** D740313-0865  
**From:** PARAMARIBO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 74  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GOVERNMENT BUILDING BURNS DOWN IN SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES  
**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, ABLD, NS, PUBLIC WORKS & TRAFFIC HEADQUARTERS, (VON GENDEREN, OLTON)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005